

# How You Can Help Disaster Survivors

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WASHINGTON – In the wake of a disaster, Americans have always come together with compassion and courage to ask how they can help survivors of catastrophic events like Hurricane Michael. There are many ways that you can help survivors and ensure that an individual contribution – whether financial donation or personal time – is carried out responsibly.

## **The fastest way to help – cash is best**

“Don’t send stuff, send money,” said Kevin Smith, director of the Department of Homeland Security Center for Faith and Opportunity Initiatives, “The best way to help survivors is to donate time and money to trusted organizations.”

The most effective means to support recovery of communities affected by hurricanes and tropical storms is to donate money to trusted voluntary, faith, and community-based charitable organizations. This gives these organizations the ability to purchase what survivors need right now. In addition, when these organizations purchase goods or services locally, they pump money back into the local and regional economy, helping businesses recover faster.

An outstretched hand supports a heart, set against a blue background. FEMA seal in the lower

The National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD) list trusted organizations receiving donations, many of which are already coordinating relief and response efforts in the impacted areas. If you need help in determining who to give to, visit the NVOAD website, [www.nvoad.org](http://www.nvoad.org), which includes a list of major non-profits active in disaster work.

## **Volunteering**

Anyone seeking an opportunity to get involved in response and recovery operations underway is encouraged to volunteer with local and nationally known organizations. A list of volunteer websites is available at [www.nvoad.org](http://www.nvoad.org).



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Florida and Georgia ask that volunteers not self-deploy, as unexpected arrival in affected communities creates an additional burden for first responders.

To register as an affiliated volunteer with a voluntary or charitable organization, visit the [National VOAD](#) for a list of partners active in disaster.

Impacted states have also started coordinating donations and volunteer efforts directly. For more information on their efforts, visit:

## Florida

Florida asks that people consider donating to the Florida Disaster Fund by visiting [www.FloridaDisasterFund.org](http://www.FloridaDisasterFund.org), or texting DISASTER to 20222 to make a one-time donation of \$10.

Those interested in volunteering, or looking for more ways to donate can visit [www.volunteerflorida.org](http://www.volunteerflorida.org).

## Georgia

Georgia reminds those looking to help that cash donations are the most effective way to provide assistance to those in need. Find a list of trusted voluntary organizations in Georgia at <https://gavoad.communityos.org>.

If you would like to volunteer, do not self-deploy. Visit [the Georgia volunteer registration page](#) on [NVOAD's site](#) or contact an organization directly to offer your service.

Georgia invites statewide nonprofit disaster relief organizations to join [Georgia VOAD](#). Email [gastatevoad@gmail.com](mailto:gastatevoad@gmail.com) with a description of your services.

However you choose to give, be patient. Recovery lasts much longer than media attention. Recovery needs will continue for many months, often many years, after the disaster. Your support is always appreciated.

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